RESOLUTIONS.

AGRICULTURAL TRAINING IN SCHOOLS.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT : The first resolution standing in the name of Mr. Kochukora tharakan was being discussed when the House adjourned last time.

The resolution reads thus :

"This Assembly recommends to Government that in all Middle Schools and High Schools in Travancore, agriculture be introduced as a main subject of study and instructions imparted both scientifically and practically and that for practical training, the necessary lands be acquired or taken on lease where acquisition is not feasible."

The Director of Public Instruction had not completed his speech when we adjourned then. He will now continue his speech.

MR. A. GOPALA MENON (*Director of Public Instruction*) : Sir, in continuing the remarks which I made on the 24th January 1941, I have to submit that there are various facts to be considered before the resolution can be accepted in its present form. I was saying that first of all we have to find out suitable areas where the experiment can be started. In this matter the co-operation of the Agricultural Department would be essential and when convenient areas are selected, the next question will be to get lands, for the school children to work on and the proposition is a very difficult one. Generally when the Education Department asks for lands the price goes up and we have to pay heavily. Mr. Kochukoratharakan has suggested that lands may be taken on lease. I do not know whether the land owners will be willing to let out their lands on lease to the Education Department or whether the Accounts Department would permit such transactions to be entered into by school teachers with private bodies. It is going to be a very complicated problem.

Then there is the next problem of getting trained teachers. That we are getting over because Government have authorised the Public Service Commissioner to recruit properly trained teachers for appointment in the schools. With such persons posted in suitable places, it will be possible to start a course in practical training in agriculture provided we have lands, as I have said before.

Recently I had been to the Agricultural school at Kenni and I had a talk with the Principal of that institution. I found that Rs. 100 will be required for initial equipment for a moderate-sized agricultural farm. That also has to be provided for. I do not say that these are very serious problems. But at the same time, they are necessary small items: so far in regard to the Malayalam and Tamil Schools which are under the absolute control of the Education Department.

When we come to English schools which are the main target of Mr. Kochukoratharakan, I am on very difficult ground. My friend the Pro-Vice-Chancellor has a voice in the regulation of the course of secondary education and very often when the two agencies come into

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

[Mr. A. Gopala Menon.]

contact they have differed in their opinion with regard to the quantum of subject matter in regard to the various courses of instruction. I am hoping that with the co-operation of the present patriotic Pro-Vice-Chancellor, it would be possible to come to an understanding in the matter of reducing the length of course for certain subjects with a view to provide two or three hours for practical instruction in the middle schools to begin with, and thereby give an impetus to the practical training in the English schools also. Thus from the side of the Education Department, I can offer every possible encouragement for bringing this scheme into operation. While Government have very deliberately and openly proclaimed the need for the country to cultivate its own food-stuffs and to make itself self-sufficient in the matter of paddy and while Government also have literally insisted on introducing a course of vocational training in all grades of schools, I need add very little as an assurance on the part of the Education Department to have a full idea of the extent to which the Government and the Department fall in with the proposal of Mr. Kochukoratharakan.

I might however say that all these ambitions and wishes of the Department will fail if the parents and the people will not rise to the occasion and heartily co-operate with the school authorities and the department in this matter. I now find it difficult to locate the various articles connected with the manual training course which was once the craving of the people and which received the blessing of the legislature and on which Government spent so much money. I now find it difficult to store them in my office until a scheme of vocational training can be brought into effect. That is one side of the matter. In some places we have materials for spinning and weaving which in former days formed another project which my predecessors in office were asked to undertake and which was ushered in with great expectations. I hope that at least this experiment will bear useful fruits. Therefore it is that I have pre-eminently to secure the sympathy of the people, and the sympathy of the parents in the matter of giving this very desirable course a good start and the possibility of success.

The idea of introducing some kind of agricultural training is not new and we are told that in some schools in the neighbouring State of Cochin it has been successful. The possibility of success in one or two areas I can very well see. But nevertheless, as I have told the House before and as Mr. P. S. Mahomed has pointed out, there are serious practical difficulties about some of which I have spoken. The Government would find it easy to introduce this measure but my difficulty, as I anticipated, is to get the children go out and work. As I have said before, the class of parents who sent their children to the secondary schools are somewhat different from the class of parents who send their children to the malayalam and tamil schools. In South Travancore they have come out with certain experiments in gardening and agriculture which the Dewan himself had the kindness to visit the other day and which he characterised as very hopeful. I may assure the

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

House that in the Malayalam Schools we hope to work it out without much difficulty. My fear is with regard to small boys being asked to work in the hot sun, carry water, to dig and to work in the fields.

MR. K. P. KOCHUKORATHARAKAN: വെയിലത്തു പാടത്തിക്കുടങ്ങളിൽ അയക്കാൻ മടിക്കുന്നതു് ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥന്മാരുടെ കുട്ടികളെ അല്ലയോ?

MR. A. GOPALA MENON: I do not know whether the officials are the only people who object to their children being asked to work in the hot sun. All people are likely to raise objection when their tenderly nourished children are asked to work in the hot sun. I do not blame them. But such difficulties may arise. I am sure that with this spirit of co-operation, and willingness, the Department can come forward to do something in the measure which Mr. Kochukoratharakan has proposed.

In addition to all these, I may add that I would require the advice of the Agricultural Director in this direction. The Director of Agriculture has now entered into a partnership with the Education Department in the matter of giving instruction in agricultural matters. It is under his personal direction that text books connected with agriculture are written and therefore I have every hope that he will be in a position to get into contact with the teachers and other authorities who have to bring into practical operation the various lessons which he has introduced and the various measures which he has proposed. Further, he will be in a position also to advise the Department not only in the selection of proper areas but also in the choice of proper teachers. This measure, therefore requires the assistance and advice of the Director of Agriculture to whom I now appeal to supplement my answer.

MR. K. R. NARAYANA AIYER: Sir, I have not very much to add to what has already been stated in reply to the resolution by the honourable member in charge of the Education Department. The resolution says:—

> "This Assembly recommends to Government that in all Middle schools and High schools in Travancore, agriculture be introduced as a main subject of study and instructions imparted both scientifically and practically and that for practical training the necessary lands be acquired or taken on lease where acquisition is not feasible."

The whole difficulty lies in the fact that there are more than 114 High schools, 183 English middle schools and 472 Malayalam Middle and High schools in the State. It is extremely difficult to introduce agriculture as a compulsory subject in all these institutions either immediately or even in the course of a few years.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The House will now adjourn and meet again tomorrow at 11'O clock.

The House adjourned at 5 P. M.

A. GUNAMONY,
Secretary to the Sri Mulam Assembly.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly